



After my main studies of Romanic philology which included obtaining teaching qualifications for high-schools, several teacher trainings in general (e.g. for adolescents as well as for adults) and a lot of attended seminars, I have been influenced by the aspects of professional development such as theoretic models like the “Ten Characteristics of a good Teacher” (German: *Zehn Merkmale guten Unterrichts*) (cf. Meyer 2010, 9) and various defined competences within the so called EPIK¹- model: *Reflection and Discourse, Profession Awareness, Collaboration Collegiality, Ability to Differentiate and Personal Mastery* (the power of individual competence) (cf. Schratz, Paseka, & Schritteser, 2011, 26). If a good teacher masters all of these concepts outlined/mentioned above, he or she may justifiably be surely considered as “perfect”. On the other hand, you should show “courage for the gap” which means that, as the teacher, you are allowed to commit mistakes. Due to the experience I have fortunately had so far, I know that it is always possible to improve the teaching process by practicing. Teaching means learning, too. A so called mistake may be considered as something wrong, but I always tell my students of all ages that we can only learn by making mistakes. As Plato’s Cave Allegory of someone searching the light in order to get to know the world we have to leave our comfort zone and try something new. Trying can mean failing, but if you don’t even try, you won’t gain anything. In my classes I always provide a mixture of methods to keep the lessons exciting, but also to find out what the best way that my students perceive the content of a specific topic.

The different ways and of course communicative activities should also be part of the individual types of learners in a foreign language: after all, they should be able in foreign language-learning to express themselves in order to express their individual needs. As it is advised that everybody in the classroom should “risk” to speak, I opt to ask questions to the students. Starting a course, I focus on working on a “culture of communication” in the classroom. Nobody should be afraid of making mistakes when speaking and everybody should always be encouraged to say whatever she/he wants. I wish to create an atmosphere in which students can meet their full potential. I will provide a safe environment where students are invited to share their ideas and dare to take risks. In order to support learners’ autonomic learning process I usually propose activities in pairs and in groups. In this way I may help them to express their thoughts in their foreign language they are learning.

For me it is important to establish a structure at the beginning of each class, so that all instructions become clearer to my students. Explications and procedures should be expressed in a very easy way (maybe also by gesture, facial expressions or drawings), but,

¹ „Entwicklung von Professionalität im internationalen Kontext“ was a research project by the Federal Ministry of Education and Culture in 2005 developing a framework for professional competences for Austrian teachers within an international context.



indeed, in the foreign language. If students have any questions, I also try to answer in the language we learn.

My way of communication during the teaching procedure is quite direct and I am quick to remind my students what my expectations are.

My personal emotions are in full flow when I talk in a positive way of my subjects and the cultures I am teaching. You can only inspire your students by your subject if you feel inspired by it, too. In conclusion, I consider these five elements are conducive to learning: 1. The teacher's role should be guided by professional pedagogical and didactic awareness. 2. The "mistake" is considered as something normal and even important in order to learn – either by students and teacher. 3. Teaching process should be structured, provided by exercises, which seem to be part of learners' universe – linguistically and psychologically meaningful for all types of learners in the present moment of the class. 4. All participants know about the way of communications ("rules"). 5. Each student is individual: The difficulty so commonly faced by the modern-day teacher is the attempt to pave the way for student individualization depending on the number of students in the class.

In future teaching action I intend to focus on a teaching structure based on good transparency and blackboard drawings. Furthermore, I always learn either from colleagues or didactic actions in a process focused on lifelong-learning: New strategies and methods will always be part of my planning. During classes I have had the chance to experience different situations with all kinds of challenges, mostly based on reflection afterwards, which I always try to integrate in future aspects.

If any discrepancies occur during the learning progress, which interrupts the progression, I will of course reflect and act. In this case, I would set and repeat previous didactic steps (exercises, explanations, ...). After all, good teaching means being able to act according to the situation and to promote learning.

After all these considerations, I still believe that the most important thing in this profession is the joy of one's own actions and how to deal with people (especially the affected age group). For that reason, I value the importance of keeping the joy of the students high. And us teachers should do that for ourselves as well. In this case we will be able to keep spreading enthusiasm to the class and be able to motivate our learners accordingly. For me, it is always nice to hear how positively most of my fellow colleagues speak about their role as teachers, their lessons and their students. Although it is easy to hear that there is a lot of work and preparation time behind the scenes, we are happy to be in that leading role and I am sure that this enthusiasm is felt and appreciated by learners. Finally, I want to declare that as a teacher you have to be a reflective person in order to maintain your commitment and



your motivation in the long term. The feedback from the study group or the observation of colleagues can also be useful. Then it is possible to live for that profession as a vocation for a lifetime.

Used Sources:

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